

A

Brief Exposition

OF THE

FANATICISM, FALSE DOCTRINES,

AND

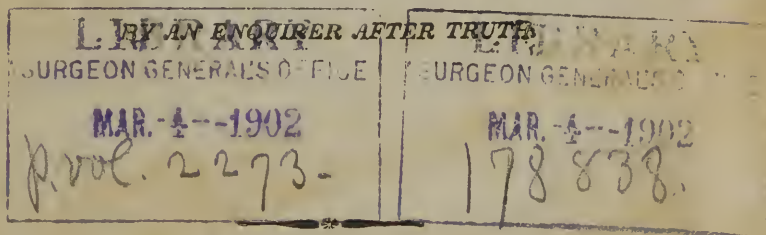
ABSURDITIES,

OF THE

PEOPLE CALLED SHAKERS:

CONTAINED IN

Their own Religious Creed, or Confession of Faith,
AS PUBLISHED BY THEMSELVES.



POUGHKEEPSIE:

PRINTED AT THE OBSERVER OFFICE,

FOR THE AUTHOR,

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A BRIEF EXPOSITION, &c.

To Ebenezer Bishop,
Calvin Green, and
Richard Bushnel. }

IN all things I am willing to be instructed, and from every occasion I wish to profit in the way of life and salvation.

When in trade, I frequently had dealings with your people; and when any of them were free to converse, I would embrace and improve the opportunity to inform myself of your faith and manner of getting along in this probationary state of existence. This I was prompted to do from your apparent sanctity, honesty and integrity. Nor am I about to fault you as to these points at present. But as I profess to be a plain man, I wish to be free in enquiry and plain in particulars, wherein I am not satisfied with your faith and practice; and I hope to receive the same freedom and plainness from you, or any of your denomination, nay, from every religious society, man or woman, in the world. For I am of the opinion, that a free circulation of religious sentiments, in truth and sincerity, among the various religious professors, will have a tendency to break down the separating walls erected by education and tradition, and strengthened and supported by superstition; and when these are demolished, the same truth will bind us together and make us one another's joy in the Lord.

By this you will perceive, that I, in no shape, favor a monkish, selfish religion; nor that self righteousness which holds out this language—"Stand off, for I am more holy than thou;" either in an individual or society capacity. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou didst not receive it, but had it by the strength of thy own arm? But, is not this your practice, both at home and abroad, in your private circles and public assemblies, in your conversation and in your public preaching? Yea, truly. And of what does it savour? Shall I answer, bigotry and superstition, twin sisters of corruptible origin?

Have you grace? Let it shew itself through you as sanctified vessels, that others beholding your good works may have cause to glorify your heavenly Father; and by your loving address and friendly, engaging manners, be won upon to embrace the gospel.

Here then your life will be in that which will not deceive others, nor suffer you to be deceived. But when it is only the semblance of it, no marvel that the want of charity should be apparent, and that an austere spirit preside instead of the benign spirit of the gospel, which is gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

I would to God this was your state, and the state of all who "name the name of Jesus;" then in truth, not in pretence, but in reality,

there would be a "departure from iniquity." But, Oh! the covering among you and all Christian professors that I have knowledge of, and not by the Lord's spirit: a covering with an exterior, like a coat of mail, to ward off the spear of an outward enemy. But, remember, the enemies of a christian warfare are those of his own house. Not those from an inconceivable malignancy that existed in supposition, co-existent with God, the source of all good; but what are co-existent only with the body of flesh wherein the soul resides. In accordance saith the apostle James, "Just when it conceiveth bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death." And these enemies are no more to be impelled from an attack by an outward show of godliness, than the blood of a wolf will cease to circulate because he is in sheep's clothing.

This outward show of godliness may serve to dupe the weak and credulous; but, so far from fortifying against sin, it forms a thick veil to commit it under. And unless that power which slew Rahab and wounded the dragon is suffered to rise into dominion in the soul, and and to bind not only one but all the passions, it must remain a captive to lust; all the external show of godliness to the contrary notwithstanding. Oh, the importance of this truth! Know ye it not? Know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye are reprobates? and it is HIM that must be suffered both to will and to do of his own good pleasure in the soul, or it cannot experience regeneration and the new birth, redemption from sin and a life of holiness to the Lord.

Circumcision, and all the rituals of an exterior dispensation, availeth nothing in Christ Jesus, but the new creature. Why, therefore, are ye so tenacious of your traditions? Will ye, as did the Jews formerly, make void the law of God thereby? Methinks ye are ready to ask, what is the law of God? Answer—that which it ever was, **A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE TO DEPART FROM THE SNARES OF DEATH.** Not a mere thing of speculation, *but the real life of God in the soul by inspiration*, to govern the life which it has by respiration; that so this mortal may put on immortality, and the death that this would otherwise experience may be swallowed up of divine life. This is the Tree of Life, whereunto all souls may have access, and grow up in the spirit of the highest; except they partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is own will, own wisdom, the fruit whereof is death to the soul.

Hence Christ taught nothingness of self, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace makers; for they shall be called the children of God. And that a man must deny himself—[how can he essentially deny himself without denying own will and wisdom, which constitutes the very essence of self?] or he could not be his disciple."

Here now, how plain, simple and easy to be understood is this system of divinity, taught by Jesus Christ? In it he has no legends, no legerdemains; but simply places man under a prohibitory law, similar in its design and requisition to that enjoined upon Adam, which restricted him from the knowledge of good and evil, and this restrains man from himself.

Now, when we come to consider that man has his origin in this world, both as to his flesh and spirit, and that his organization is such, that he is not only susceptible of divine impressions, but capable of improving under them to that degree, that they become his light and his life, his comfort and his hope. How rational therefore is it, as he is designed for immortality and eternal life, that the spirit of nature, which constitutes the natural man, should not only be restricted, but denied the ascendancy and supreme rule in his affections.

Hence says the Father, in figurative language to Adam, "of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." As much as to say, thy receiving this twofold fruit will sever thy life from me, the spirit of divine life; because, thy knowing good and evil for thyself, is taking an independent ground, rejecting the influence of my spirit, consequently it is withdrawn and thy soul left in a state of spiritual death.

And hence saith the Son and sent of the Father to restore man to this divine spirit, from which he had revolted, "except a man deny himself, take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Thus we see, that man's dependence on himself separated him from the divine spirit, union and communion with God, and that by denying himself through the ability of Christ he is to be restored. Thus by a dependance in Adam, [the earthly nature] all die; so, by a dependance in Christ, [a divine quickening spirit] all are made alive.

This I apprehend to be correct, according to scripture doctrine and relation of man's loss of the spirit of divine life and restoration to it again.

Now you will see that I do not believe in the primer doctrine, that "in Adam's fall we sinned all:" but in the scripture doctrine—"as the soul of the Father, so also is the soul of the Son, [clearly without sin in their origin] but the soul that sinneth it shall die, and he that doeth that which is lawful and right shall save his soul alive"—as declared by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. 18th and 33d, from the 10th to the 20th verses.

According to this doctrine, you will doubtless acknowledge with me, that the soul (which is a spirit) has ability to obey a divine spiritual law; and as like begets its like, so the soul is made alive unto God

through faith and works, in obedience to him ; and, on the contrary, any want of this conformity is sin, and produces death. It is sin, because the soul is designed to have the divine life of God for *its life* ; consequently, to have *it*, it must receive *it*, and to retain *it*, it must obey *it* : But to reject *it* is sin, because *it* is the life of God and his greatest gift to the soul, and the consequence that follows of necessity is death, or the loss of divine life in the soul. And

Also, according to the above doctrine of the inspired Prophet, I presume you will agree with me, that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. For, saith the Lord, “ when I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; if he turn from his sins, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.”

According to this, sin and death was not entailed upon the posterity of Adam, in consequence of his transgression ; but that all sinners, even Adam himself, as well as his posterity, were permitted ; nay required, to return and live.

Now, although it is said by the apostle Paul, “ if there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law : ”—it is evident that he meant that law of types and shadows which was substituted, because of a departure from the law of the spirit of life which sets the soul free from sin and death, to lead back to obedience to this spiritual law ; yet it is evident from the prophetic declaration, that this very spiritual law had not been repealed, nor become null, nor void. But that the righteousness of the righteous, from Adam down to this day, must have been by this law ; and the wickedness of the wicked, by a departure from it.

And this law is the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth the spirit of man an understanding in the things of God, and as expressed above, a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.

It was by this, doubtless, that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain—that Enoch walked with God—that Noah was righteous, and instructed to build an ark, to the saving of his household from perishing in the flood. The time would fail me, to tell of Abraham, Lot, the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles. In short, it is the *only* law by which the soul can have any knowledge of God, and be a partaker of his divine nature, and so have life and immortality conferred through obedience to it.

And had not this divine life been departed from, where would have been the necessity of substituting any thing in its stead, as a school-master to bring to Christ ? Or, which is the same thing to this law, to wit, divine inspiration, the alone medium of salvation to the soul ? You, and all men of principle and candor, will allow with myself, that there would have been none. Grant that it has been departed from, and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, which in obedience they might have enjoyed : It establishes a cause, which pro-

duceth a separation of the life of God from the soul, which exists no longer than the soul stands opposed to God. "For if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if not, sin lyeth at the door." "The soul that sinneth it shall die; but he that doeth that which is lawful and right, shall save his soul alive."

And again—"hereby know we (saith the Apostle) that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." Now "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if Christ be in you, the [spirit of the] body is dead, (that is, ceases to be alive to sinful impressions,) because [of the effect] of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." That is, the spirit of the natural man is inspired with divine life, and therefore is alive by reason of the righteousness of compliance to the divine spirit. "But if the spirit of him (God) that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, God shall also quicken [the spirit of] your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to [the spirit which actuates] the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, [this spirit which actuates the flesh] ye shall die; (that is, thereby divine impressions will be withdrawn from the soul, and its life in God will be lost;) but if ye through the [divine] spirit mortify the [spirit of nature from whence the] deeds of the body [naturally flow,] ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God." And as a criterion to know whether we have this spirit, the Apostle saith, "hereby know ye the spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, [that is in the flesh of the confessor] is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, [of the confessor] is not of God."

Again, Christ saith, "labour not for the meat which perisheth; [now here, he meant not food in general, but the spirit which is the life of the flesh, which this food nourisheth,] but for that meat [now he means his own spirit] which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give to you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

Then said they unto him, "what shall we do that we might work the work of God? Jesus answered, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him [that is his spirit] whom he hath sent. For the bread of God is *he* [that is his spirit] which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." That is life to the spirit of man, which is of the world, that it may be headed and directed, bounded and governed, and finally *born of God*.

Then said they unto him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them, I am [that is my spirit is] the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Again, he saith to the Jews, "verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me [that is Christ's spirit] hath everlasting life. I am

[i.e. his spirit is] the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead ; [because it only supported the outward man, and was typical of spiritual bread, which nourisheth the soul to eternal life.] This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am [that is my spirit is] the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this [spiritual] bread, he shall live forever ; and the bread that I will give him is my flesh. Saith the Jews, how can this man give us his flesh to eat ? Then said Jesus unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed : he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even shall live by me."

"This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live forever." These last verses are explanatory of what he meant by giving his flesh for the life of the world. What is mentioned in a figure must be realized by a participation of his spirit, in order to the soul's immortality and eternal life.

Thus you see the great business of religion and christianity is to be obedient to God through Jesus Christ, his mediatorial spirit. The soul is as really to be born of God, by his divine spirit, as the body is born of the world by the spirit of the world. We are first constituted and compounded, body and soul, of the world. This is Adam the earthly nature, or first man, wherein if we depend after the soul has been made alive by the inspiration of the Almighty, this produces death—*so in Adam all die*. But even in this state, if we receive this divine spirit, which is Christ in his second appearing, and depend upon it—*so in Christ all are made alive*.

It is the divine spirit of God that must first make the soul alive unto him. Nothing short of this can effect it. So after transgression or death of the soul, it is the same power that restores it to life in God again.

Thus it may be considered the first and second coming of Christ, or the spirit of God ; first, to make the soul alive unto him ; and secondly, if it should transgress and die, to raise it from the dead into newness of life, to serve the living God.

Here is *Christ's first and second appearance*, I apprehend, according to scripture, both essential and availing to the salvation of the soul. Wherefore have you fabricated a system, saying, "Christ in man alone could have NO power over his body, the church, for full redemption, but by the WOMAN." [Ann Lee.]

"Let God be true and every man a liar ;" and so he is, and they are,

who thus traduce the Saviour of the world. Who is Ann Lee? Certainly not the mother of the Shakers, nor any one living, but *their* mistress! Or why do you follow her, and make the power of Christ void in man, but by this woman? In so doing, do you not exalt this woman above Christ, and worship her? *For shame!* You that make sexual intercourse even in lawful wedlock the sin of allsins, will make religion *nothing*, and the power of Christ void in man only, as you have to do with a woman. It is a burlesque upon common sense, religion and every thing serious!

Thus you see, by the doctrine of the scripture in a few words, how your system is demolished, which you have been patching and connecting together part of a century. And the reason is obvious, because your foundation is not on Christ Jesus the rock of ages, against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail, but on Ann Lee, whom you stile his co-worker, his bride, the Lamb's wife, the mother of his spiritual offspring, a poor fallible, weak woman, who so far from having power against the gates of hell, opened the very sluices of it in herself, by intemperance, and to cover it would say she was in the state of the drunkard; that it was necessary she should be baptized into all states, that she might sympathize with all. And at other times, that the sins of the people were upon her, and that under their weight she would stagger and reel, and even spue, to void them from her stomach. But what says common fame? I will tell you what a candid man told me: That his father lived near New Lebanon, in the days of Ann Lee, and that he frequently saw her drink and intoxicated, and that liquor was abundantly used by her and the Elders in that day. And what says Thomas Brown, in his history of the Shakers, about mothers being intoxicated? Why, that she got drunk and spued; and this I have had from Thomas' mouth too. These things I dont find that you contradict. And further, if you should, Thomas says he has incontestible proof of it, and that you will not, or dare not do it.

Now, what are professors and even profane to think of you, who claim to be branches of such a root. Notwithstanding your outwardly beautiful appearance, of what use will it be to you in the day of account, if you are inwardly full of deception, nay all uncleanness, rottenness, stench and dead mens bones? Like graves which appear not. In vain will be all your building on so corrupt a foundation.

But I hope better things of the sincere part of you, and things which accompany salvation; whether you are of this class, you are better able than myself to determine.

But if you, the leaders of this society, have instituted this plan of salvation in the will and wisdom of man, (and surely from the complexion it wears it seems evident) how must your case stand in the day of righteous retribution? How any unprejudiced man or set of men, from the scriptures of truth could devise such a plan, is exceed-

ing strange, nay impossible. But when I consider the heterogeneous medley which constitutes professed christendom, as having its origin with the beast and false prophet, or in other words, originated in the will and wisdom of man, separate and detached from the divine will, I cease to marvel; that you have come up with your name, I do not mean the Lord *our righteousness*, but a name which implies this defective, to wit—*The Lord and Ann Lee our righteousness*. As if the Lord was not what he declares himself to be—I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour.

This notion which you have in regard to Ann Lee's being the second or spiritual Eve, Christ's wife, and as to her being as essential in producing a regenerated offspring as a natural mother to a natural offspring, is, of all the ideas that ever yet appeared, the most wild, extravagant and presumptuous. Ye have conceived and brought forth not only wind, mischief and falsehood, but a monster, a WOMAN, naturally as corrupt as yourselves, and married her to CHRIST, in order to your spiritual existence, or being born again of incorruptible seed. No marvel if you miss of it, if this is your plan. But you may not fail of getting some by your enchantments to be dupes to your system, to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

If the story of Eunice Chapman be true, in regard to your smuggling her children from her, how much worse is it to bereave a tender mother of her children, than it is for you to increase your numbers by lawful wedlock, and so fulfil the first in nature and greatest command—"Be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth, &c." This you are willing others should do, or why do you kidnap their children? Be assured, though judgment creeps with woolen feet, it will surely overtake with iron hands. If you distort and do violence to scripture, to make out your heterogeneous system, for conscience sake don't make widows and fatherless children by your religion. Remember, that the apostle saith, true "religion is this, to visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world." I know the latter is your pretension, but what will the world think of it, when you not only make the widow by taking her husband from her, but afflict and distress her fatherless children by your traditions?

A tree is known by its fruits, and not by the wind that blows through its branches; so you and all professors are to be known, and not by the doctrine they preach or publish, but by the life, conduct and conversation they exhibit to the world.

Is it not strange that a perfect model of christianity has been exhibited nearly 2000 years to the world, and yet what various conjectures there are about it? Every imitation seems to be hit upon but the true, and is not this the cause—"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers," saith Christ. Is it not therefore clearly evident, that whatever our sanctity and austerities as to life and con-

duct may be, if they are not the result of the life of Christ in us, we act the part of thieves and robbers, by excluding his government in us. We rob him of his rule and reign in us, whose right it is, and deprive ourselves of the invaluable treasure of his spirit.

Look at it: I do not mean you, more than others who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." What if you circumcise yourselves, and put on all the outward appearance of the christian; what is this but "garnishing the sepulchres of the dead," covering the wolf in sheep's cloathing, and the serpent with the appearance of the dove, taking up a daily cross, not to follow Christ, but to assume his appearance to deceive the world, and in the end, the loss of the soul? This must unavoidably be the result of all your shew of sanctity, if it proceeds not from a real birth and life of the spirit of Christ in the soul; and where and with whom this is the case, what need is there of anxiety about externals? If the inside is clean, that is to say, if the spirit of Christ dwells there, will not the outside be clean also? Most assuredly. What need then of Ann Lee in the work of the soul's new birth, sanctification and redemption? Certainly not any, unless God is not Almighty, and Jesus Christ nothing without her; all which blasphemous absurdity your system, published to the world, under the title of Christ's Second Appearing, argues.

No marvel to me, that to make out your system of the grossest absurdity that rational beings were ever guilty of, that it required a volume of a duodecimo size, containing 622 pages of small print, to make it wear the least appearance of truth. To establish one point, that Ann Lee is the mother of all the children of regeneration, you have ransacked scripture from Genesis to Revelations, twisting and untwisting such parts of them as you thought would answer your purpose, and by sophistry applied them in the most abominable fabrications. The linsey-woolsey garment, the cake half baked, and the half Jew and half Ashdod under the Jewish dispensation, is nothing, as to abomination, to be compared with it. What! tell to the world a story, and pretend to prove it by scripture too, that you don't believe yourselves? This is like the woman who read the bible to her servants in this way—that if they did not keep the kitchen clean, when they died they would go to hell. If so, it would seem you think all dupes and fools but yourselves. Fools, I will acknowledge we ought to be for Christ's sake, but not for Ann Lee's sake, nor to build up your baseless fabric, that rests upon her.

Suppose every society had come forward in systematizing as you have, for all have the same right, and all perhaps can boast of as great patterns of piety as Ann Lee. The Quakers might have hit upon a Margaret Fell, the Presbyterians upon a Phillis Wheatly, the Universalists upon Jemima Wilkinson, and so on; and worked these women into the systems, with as much propriety and art as you have Ann Lee into yours. What would have been the consequence? Why, in

this way Christ would be imposed upon with as many wives, by rotten system makers, as Solomon had, or as you have spiritual wives in your society.

As ludicrous as this may appear, yet is it not due to you, for your folly in giving Christ Ann Lee to wife?

Were you honest and sincere in this idea, that Christ must have a wife to beget children in the regeneration, you would only went forth in the light and ability derived from Christ; then your conceptions as to the process by which regeneration and the new birth is effected, would have been legally begotten, but now they are bastards and not sons. Hence all the abomination which you have in 622 pages published to the world, concerning Ann Lee's being equal with Christ, and the mother of all who constitute the true church.

What you have said concerning "the true character of the church of Christ," evidently appears to be a mere fabrication, suited to a plan instituted in the will and wisdom of man. Hence, according to the order you have adopted as to church government, the scriptures are quoted to sanction it, and made to bend to suit the particular cast you would have your society of. Hence, you begin, "The church of Christ is composed of such as are called and chosen of God, out of the spirit and practice of the world." This is very well, but will it follow from thence, as you have falsely added, that in obedience to that call they are all separated from the rest of mankind, and united in one body; [in plain English as the Shakers are.]

Separated they will be, from acts of unrighteousness, by that good spirit which called them, in the same measure as they are obedient to it. But what ground have you for this assertion—"that they are all separated from the rest of mankind and united into one body," (in a literal sense?) Which sense you intended it should be taken, or else your system could not be built up.

Are you so blind to truth and hoodwinked by prejudice, as to think that all the called and chosen of the Lord are separated from the rest of mankind, and united into one outward visible body of any one denomination of Christians under heaven? I will answer for you, I think you are not. But to answer your sectarian views and carnal purposes, you have done it. It is probable your earthly nature would be as much gratified in getting to yourselves a NAME, as other Babylonians. For all who are so tenacious of getting to themselves any name, except the Lord our righteousness, particularly you who ascribe as much of your righteousness to Ann Lee of Toad Lane, as to Jesus Christ of Nazareth, evidently declare themselves on the side of Babel.

Were you consonant with the scriptures, instead of making the above assertion, "that the chosen of the Lord are separated from all the rest of mankind and united into one body," you would believe and preach with the apostle, that "of every nation, kindred, tongue

and people, they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him." "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him," whether he is Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. For in this state, whatever a man's outward situation may be, as to his being united to this, that, or the other body of professed christians, or whether he is not connected with any, or whether he has heard any thing of the different names as to the professions of religion, this alters not the principle of righteousness in him, which is the spirit of Christ, who to such a soul is *all in all*: but ~~to~~ *Am Lee nothing at all*, any more than any other person of equal piety.*

☞ *This you know to be true, nor dare you deny it.*

Now, what think ye, that the Church is confined to any body of people or professing Christians, much less to the few who have separated themselves under a belief in a *Female Saviour*? And how can you but abhor this idea, when the lip of truth has asserted, "that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female," but all are one. That is to say, those who are born of incorruptible seed, and so in spirit, come to be new creatures, either male or female as to their corporal organs; yet genders do not apply to spirits, but are confined to the corporal systems which they inhabit; nor is it rational in this changed state to cease the use of the organs, but that they shall be directed by divine wisdom, and used to the glory of God.† Let nature's demands be answered in nature, in the discretion and by the direction of the grace of God, which hath appeared to all men, teaching the deadly ungodliness. Is it ungodly to answer the pressing demands of that nature and feeling, which a wise God for wise purposes has ordained? Certainly not, provided the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness is first and uppermost in the affections; then this ruling power will so regulate, that all things necessary (and the demands of nature are necessary as a life in nature is necessary and the fulfilment of them discreetly) shall be added. Nay, verily, but this is godliness which is great gain, because it redounds to the glory of God in fulfilling his demands, both in nature and grace, by the governing principle of his wisdom. But this is ungodliness, not to seek *first* the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and thence to give unrestrained latitude to all the passions in the most licentious indulgences. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? Therefore, fulfill all his commands, both in nature and grace, agreeably to his wisdom which dwelleth in you. Dis-

* This addition I might have spared—and so you may say of all the rest: but be willing to hear with both ears, and then judge; for if your system falls at the touch of human investigation, how abhorrent must it be in the divine sight?

† Now, I believe you may be allowed the liberty to "lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles." For none can act in the sphere of life with so much propriety, and to the glory of God, as those who are governed by his wisdom, both in nature and grace. I wish to enlarge on this subject, but my limits will not permit; "for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

trust not his providence, but have faith in his blessed arm of power, who is able to say to the stormy passions of life be still, and to the proud tempestuous billows of the elements, yea to the ministers of elementary life, hither shall ye come and no further, and there shall your proud waves be staid! Here, then, in faith in his name your lights might so shine in your different domestic circles, as husband and wife, parents and children, that others seeing your good works might have cause to glorify your heavenly father. Good works, both in nature and grace, because bound by his wisdom. Then you would be as the salt of the earth, which being scattered amongst mankind in detached bodies and in domestic circles, which would have a savor of life among them; much more than if the light was confined to united compact bodies comparable to beds of ease, and the salt in a measure comparable to the confines of these bodies, which would be abundantly more useful scattered among the children of men, than to keep it in a collected capacity. You know salt can't save meat if it is kept in one mass detached from it, but it must be strewed amongst it; so also with the light, if it is confined to one house or people, it cannot diffuse itself to others and be so useful as it would be if they, the individuals of this house, each as candlesticks in detached and separate situations among mankind, should bear the light to the glory of God. Then you would be the disciples of Christ indeed; the SALT of the earth, and the LIGHT of the world.

You will please to excuse this digression, for my view of you in this situation is *enrapturing* indeed. But on the other hand, when I view you in your detached secluded situation, it makes me think of a body of stagnant water, which is rendered lifeless and even stinking for the want of circulation. But to return.

Now, making the best of Ann Lee, say nothing about her defects in point of character, she was nothing without Christ; yet you have made her the CHURCH, the MOTHER of *all that are created anew in Christ Jesus*: and, to cap the climax, the *Lord our righteousness, or God manifested in the flesh!!!* See C. 2d appearing, page 458.

Admitting that she had become regenerated and born of incorruptible seed, what was she more than a member of Christ's mystical body the church? If so, what claim has she, being a member, to an equality with Christ the head? Certainly not any. But you have made her equal, nay more than equal, by saying Christ's power in man is nothing without her. Thus you have not only conceived wind and brought forth falsehood, but a MONSTER (instead of a mother) with two heads to one body—Christ and Ann Lee the HEADS, and the Church the body.

I have many things to say unto you, however you may be prepared to bear them; but my present limits will not permit much enlargement. Yet as Richard asked me, after being at your meeting, how I liked it; I then, not having time to shew my reasons, waved answering.

But now I will tell you. First, however, let me observe, that from your apparent sanctity I expected the most solemn scene I had ever witnessed. Perhaps my ideas were too much raised, and therefore when the meeting itself opened to my view, I was much disappointed. Be that as it may, when I became seated, the meeting gathered and opened in a style so foreign to solemn spiritual worship, I was much affected, even to tears, to see so many of my dear brothers and sisters in a natural relation, whose countenances seemed to bespeak something better than fanaticism and delusion, go forth to perform divine spiritual worship in acts of **DIVERSION**. O! how unlike that devotion, when in the silence of all flesh (or the spirit of nature) the soul is in holy converse with the spirit of the Almighty, whose inspiration giveth it understanding and enjoyment in things of a divine nature, is your *lodo* singing and dancing? Instead of discovering a manifestation of the mighty power of God through you, who formerly were termed Shakers, because of your shaking and quaking in your devotions, under a sense of his gracious presence; behold nothing more extraordinary among you than any carnal man or woman can at any time perform—and indeed no spirit discoverable in your devotion, but what is common to the world at large. Certainly your singing and dancing seems to comport more with the spirit of dissipation, than that of divine inspiration: and as to your exhortation and preaching, instead of that energy in which the words of the Apostles were uttered, and that amazing power which accompanied their preaching and sending light into the understanding and conversion into the hearts—how flat and spiritless are you in your exhortations, and destitute of the benign energetic spirit of the gospel in your preaching? Therefore, it seemed to me more like a mock meeting, than a real one of devotion—“like children in the markets, and calling unto their fellows and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.” But wisdom is justified of her children, and they are not confined to the pale of your society, nor any other, nor to any particular mode of worship; but they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him, whether they have any name to religion or not, or whether they are members of societies that call themselves Christians, Jews, or Mahometans. Neither *names* nor *modes* alter the heart, change the affections, nor regenerate the soul; but it is giving the heart up to the Lord, agreeable to his call, saying, I am the clay, thou art the potter, make me and fashion me, O Lord, according to thy will.

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

To conclude: Were you ever sensible of going forth in the spirit and power of the highest, return to it again that you may have more than a skeleton, shadow, or shew in religion, yea the very life and

power of it ; for, surely, if you are so favored with the power of God as to work miracles, certainly it would seem there would be something of it discoverable in your devotions. Don't take so high ground as never to be seen standing on it. Don't turn devotion into DIVERSION, nor religion into hypocrisy. Don't assume works to that degree, nor in that shape, that will rob God of his glory and give his praise to images, lest you become idolaters, and cause the inferior classes of men and women in your society to bow down to and worship you. But let your faith be in God alone, and your works so corresponding as that he may be praised and honored in all his injunctions and commands, both in nature and grace. Don't trammel the minds of the youth and inexperienced among you, with wrong apprehensions of God ; that he can be known through any other medium to the salvation of the soul, than by an immediate revelation of his own spirit to the soul. Remembering, that whatever has priority or preference to this, whether it is your own instructions or even the Bible itself, is a thief and a robber. For it is virgin souls, that is, those that are chaste and pure in their devotions to Christ, that conceive the immortal seed of divine life in the soul, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost.

This is the male and female correspondence in order to immortality and eternal life in the soul, for which you have so abortively labored to make out Ann Lee to be the mother of all the truly begotten of God. But so far from it, if she was a recipient of it herself, it was to the extent she could go. It is the soul, a spirit, that stands in need of divine life ; nor can it be communicated to it, but by the overshadowing of the highest. This overshadowing must be to every individual soul, so certain as it is made a partaker of a divine, heavenly nature.— Now, look at it : admitting that Ann Lee received a change through this medium, it was not an offspring of her's, descending as the natural offspring of earthly parents, who in their turn would become parents, and so on ad infinitum ; because it was only a regeneration or changing the soul from nature to grace, from earthly to divine affections, and from thence no new offspring could descend from her, but a mere change of herself from natural to divine affections, from an earthly to a heavenly state of soul. A new inheritance by a change of soul, a new life to the soul by the inspiration of the Almighty, or by the overshadowing of the Highest, or by the ingrafting word of divine life, all which are the same thing and produce the same effect ; not an offspring or descendant from the soul, but a change of soul, as the meal was changed by the operation of the leaven.

Hence you see the impropriety of calling her mother ; for they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more ; for they are as the angels of God, being the children of the resurrection. And who is the resurrection and

life to the soul, but Christ in the soul? who declared, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Now as that was not first (as to the state of the soul) which is [divinely] spiritual, but that [spirit] which is natural; hence the necessity of a change, and this is effected by that which the Apostle says is afterward, and this is a divine spirit and changes the soul, provided it is passive to its embraces and holy operations. Souls thus devoted constitute the Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, and **HE** their holy head and heavenly husband. Whether their mortal bodies are male or female, gender extends no further, their souls are all one in Christ Jesus, the objects of his embraces, the subjects of his regard. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."* In this state they have no more occasion to say, every man to his brother and to his neighbor, know ye the Lord; for in this dispensation all shall know me, saith the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. They shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Because they have become children of the Lord by the changing operation of his spirit, and are all taught of the Lord, and great shall be their power. Not the children of Ann Lee, by Jesus Christ, whom you falsely stile the mother of all the children of regeneration.

Are ye so far departed from the dictates of the holy spirit, as thus to systematize, as if the spirit was not able to beget its likeness, in the souls of all, and complete the new birth, and so produce the children of regeneration without the assistance of Ann Lee!!!

Out of your own mouths ye shall be judged. Look at your book of inconsistencies, which you have the hardness to call Christ's second appearing; which in fact is more like Ann Lee's second appearing, Christ's total eclipsing. How strange it is, that your virtue is such that you will not obey God's commands. That as he has made you male and female, and for this cause he has declared a man shall (not may) leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; and what God hath joined together, (thus in wedlock) let no man put asunder. Does not the scriptures say, that "marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled; but adulterers and whoremongers God will judge?" Of which class are you? Not of the married and honorable, for this you stile the sins of all the most sinful and abominable, though commanded by Jehovah. Thus you have become not only as God's to know good and evil, but wiser than God himself, by distrusting his wisdom and his power: His wisdom to direct, and his power to preserve in all movements of his requiring. Thus to avoid one extreme, committing the sin which you think our first parents were guilty of, you have run into another of equal if not greater magnitude. Nor will I charge you with being whoremongers

* Not that Christ and Ann Lee shall be to the people a God, and their offspring shall be to them a people.

and adulterers in the flesh; this yourselves and spiritual wives can determine. But one thing is strange, that you should abstain from wives in the flesh, cleave to them in the spirit, and even impose one upon Christ, and declare that without which no church regeneration nor spiritual offspring can be had!!! In the flesh treat the woman as an abomination; but in the spirit exalt her as a blessing and the only means of salvation. "If you are so unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will give you the true riches?" If you thus abuse temporal gifts, how will you improve spiritual ones? If you will not believe Moses and the Prophets, how can you be persuaded by one from the dead? Therefore, for the Lord's sake, for your own soul's sake, and that of the blessed cause of christianity, be not reproached and become a hiss and a by word among the nations, "return unto the Lord who will have mercy, and unto our God who will abundantly pardon. He will teach you of his ways, and guide you in his paths, which are pleasantness and peace."

For your acts, your system making, and your doctrine as loudly proclaims you to be out of the way, as a tree is known by its fruits.

You say, "the spirit of Christ was never committed to man to be at his disposal. God always required that man should be subject to the dictates of the spirit." This is very correct; but how do you act up to it? Your general reputation in the line of your dealing, with what you call the world's people, stands pretty fair; I mean as to the articles you raise, make and vend, with a few exceptions. But is this the result of the dictates of the spirit? If so, infidels may lay claim to it in their honesty and integrity; for I know some of them whose standing in this respect is as high as yours, and yet they reproach not the christian cause by perfidious actions, which is more than can be said of any christian name under heaven. But the truth is, it needs no greater revelation than the spirit of Antichrist to be honest in things that pertain to his kingdom; for this spirit can dictate that your character in dealing must stand fair, or you cannot be built up in outward glory. Still, I leave it to you to determine, whether it is the spirit of Christ, or the world, that governs you in things temporal. There is one thing, however, I will observe—if the spirit of the world in you was subject to the controul and under the government of the spirit of Christ, I very much doubt whether you would have systematized against the commands of God in nature, and distrusted his power in grace.

Was the spirit of Christ your guide, when you wrote "Christ's second appearing?" If it was not, you had better revise it and let it be dictated by his spirit, that it might be something like his second appearing, without sin unto salvation—or annihilate it. When his spirit becomes your wisdom, his light your director, his life "your comfort and your hope," doubtless the world will have a better specimen of it than this book, your preaching or example affords. Which I humbly crave may be the case, that ye may be clothed upon with his spirit, and redeemed from your strange delusions.

I do not wish to be tedious or troublesome. Please to bear with me a little further, for it is for your sakes as well as my own that I labor. Please to say what spirit dictated this assertion in your Christ's second appearing, page 397 and 8 :

"William, Prince of Orange, first established liberty of conscience by law in England, about the year 1689. To his honor, the Friends partook of that righteous grant ; but to their shame, as the witness of God, it was granted to them, in particular, upon their humble request, and their religion established by law."

This is a loose phraseology, and may be understood in this way : that the Friends, to their shame, partook of a righteous grant, the liberty of conscience. But I suppose you meant that it was a shame for them, as the witnesses of God, to petition a secular power for this grant ; not a shame to accept the privilege, without petitioning for it. If this is your meaning, I heartily concur with you in sentiment. But what have you done 127 years since, when you have had the experience of so many years to improve in ? Have you petitioned a secular power on the very same account, but much less in magnitude ? You will perhaps say nay. If so, what do you call your pamphlet printed in 2d mo. 20th, 1816, and laid before the members of the legislature of this state, wherein you plead like Emperors to be freed from taxation in lieu of personal military duty ? You may call it what you please. The world's people and this carnal power (the legislature) to whom to your shame and indignity you have petitioned for favors, will call it a remonstrance ; as your concluding paragraph humbly sheweth, thus—

"We confidently trust, that the [not honorable, but what is the difference in point of flattery between that and] respectable Legislature of this state, will consider our cause to be just, and will take measures to secure to us our religious and constitutional rights ; and that they will not exercise less liberty in regard to our conscientious feelings, than the neighboring states have done."

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? Thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ?"

Therefore to your shame it is a disgrace, as professing christians, that wherein ye fault others ye are guilty yourselves.

And you say their [the Friends] religion is established by law. The loose manner in which you have thrown these expressions together, seems to imply quibbling, when you are tested on these points. But that you intended that it should be so understood, see further expressions of your same book, page 403 :

"But again, when the Friends, in the declining state of their power, applied to an arm of flesh for protection, and had their religion established by law, they united with the remaining power of the beast, through the influence of which they became a dead, lifeless body, as a people."

If it was so, that the Friends had their religion established by law, they are much to be blamed ; because by this act they must have abjured their faith in Christ, their only head potentate, prophet, priest and king. You must produce better proof of it than establishing liberty of conscience by law, as you throw your own "church among

the general wreck of false buildings," which you are endeavoring to establish upon the ruins of all others. See wherein you judge others you condemn yourselves. Your remonstrance to (what in your religious strains you call the power of the beast, yet when you humble yourselves before it for favors you call it respectable) the legislature for liberty of conscience, in paying a \$4 tax in lieu of military service, is a much fouler stain upon you and argues greater weakness in the christian faith than the Friends petitioning for liberty of conscience, that they might worship God peaceably unmolested, free from stripes, imprisonment and death, which many of them experienced.

If granting liberty of conscience is establishing religion by law, then you are equally guilty with the Friends, and your system as corruptly founded, and how much more so, I leave it to you to judge, who have constituted Ann Lee as your mother in regeneration.

But the truth is, granting liberty of conscience is so far from establishing the religion of any particular sect or denomination by law, that it is a free toleration to all, "provided such liberty of conscience be not so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the secular power."

That it is a false assertion you have published to the world, that the Friends had their religion established by law, may be clearly seen by the writings of the most eminent among them in that day. See the select works of Wm. Penn, page 638, in his good advice to the church of England he says, speaking of church establishment by law :

"What weight is it to a church that she is the church by law established, when no human law can make a true church? A true church is of *Christ's* making, and is by gospel established. It is a reflection to a church, that would be thought true, to stoop to *human laws* for her establishment. I have often been scandalized at that expression, from the sons of the Church of England, especially from those of the robe. 'What do you talk for? Our religion is by *law established*;' as if that determined the question of its truth against all other persuasions."

This is the doctrine of the friends as to church establishment, from the earliest times down to the present day. Therefore you see what you have premised in regard to the Friends is false, and it is but fair to conclude that your conclusions as to their becoming a dead, lifeless body, as a people, are without foundation.

Your language to other denominations seems very much like the impious, haughty strain of the church of England above quoted. "What do you talk for? Our religion teacheth to bear our cross against the flesh, and is by Christ and Ann Lee established." As if the religion of all the rest of mankind, that are in the habit of marrying, was false and without foundation.

Is copulation under the most legal circumstances sinful? If so, then according to this conclusion, it would have been better not to have made man male and female. If so, then you have become wise above what is written, and beyond God himself, whose wisdom ordained the male and the female, but not in vain, but for the *very express purpose of conjunction*, as saith Christ in the scriptures, see Mat.

xix. 4: Mark x. 6. God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, what therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder. But you teach a different doctrine, forbidding to marry, which the scriptures say is the doctrine of devils. So, in your wisdom to avoid the flesh, have you not become preachers for the devil?

Are ye so without understanding, both in nature and grace, as to stile sexual intercourse a sinful act, because it is an act of the flesh, whenevery act of man which is under the controul of a carnal spirit is the work of the flesh? Whether in eating or drinking, or whatever else is done under the presiding of this spirit, even taking up the cross against the flesh, and all pretensions to worship God, is still the works of the flesh; and you cannot, nor dare not, deny it. And on the contrary, every act of the creature which is under the presiding of Christ's spirit in man, is to the glory of God, and you dare not to say to the contrary. Has he not made man male and female, in order to a succession in a natural sense, in order to inspiration? This you dare not deny. These two points being established, what follows? Shall not his works go into operation? You say yea, both by precept and example, except hegetting successors. Why would you stop or withstand God in this, as without it his whole creation and design as to man must be frustrated? This you dare not deny. Do you not see yourselves opposed to God, by tradition and doctrine and example too? Does it imply defectiveness on your part, or on the part of God Almighty? On your part you must own, with blushing and confusion of face. But for his sake and his cause, which he has ordained, first in nature, in order to grace; that man should first exist in nature, then in grace, and so by grace through faith be made an heir of immortality and eternal life. If you have not strength and faith enough to bear it, and vision enough to see it, do not oppose him any longer by perpetuating your traditions to after ages. But silently and meekly confess your weakness, that through want of an entire faith in God you have to cut off right hands and pluck out right eyes, to enter his kingdom. But I beseech you for the righteous cause and blessed Redeemer's sake, don't proclaim this doctrine to the world, that the kingdom of heaven must be entered *only by the halt, by the blind and the maimed*; for the defect only lies with the creature and not with the creator.

Thus you see your want of faith renders you unequal to fulfil God's design; therefore forbear your presumptuous precepts, that your society, and those of your faith constitute the only true church on earth. Call in your publications, which shew to the world that you would fain build up a society by your traditions and not by the alone power of God, which you say in man is nothing without the **WOMAN!**

When I began to write I had no prospect of extending beyond the limits of a sheet; but the more I read your book, the more I discover your want of truth and consistency. Please to read your ideas of

Christ's church in the apostles days, see C. second appearing, page 104; and then read concerning the foundation pillars of the church, page 439, 440, &c.

At the day of pentecost, "the Apostles were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.

"Then, and not till then, they began to know the truth of Christ's words, relating to the design of his work and the nature of his kingdom. This was the spirit of anointing with which Jesus himself was anointed and which he had promised to send them, to lead them into all truth.

"Here, then, was the true institution of the primitive Church; even the spirit of truth and revelation of God given to the Apostles, was the foundation upon which the church was built. The *anointing* of the Holy Ghost, that is, Christ himself being the chief corner stone: Christ dwelling in his people and they in him, according to promise."

Again—"Jesus promised them saying, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.' When he (the spirit of truth) is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come.

"This was the spirit which the Apostles received on the day of pentecost.—This was the rule of their faith, the bond of their union, and the spring of their actions."

Now let me ask you, granting this description of the true church to be correct, seeing its genuineness, foundation and increase consists in the divine spiritual revelation of God to man, and he becomes a member of it by receiving, and remains one by obeying this spirit of revelation, where in is it defective and not complete in all its parts?—Was not this spirit, which you say the Apostles received and was to be with the followers of Christ to the end of the world, and was the rule of their faith, the bond of their union, and the spring of their actions, sufficient to make all who would receive and obey it, the children of regeneration? Did it not make the Apostles so, and all who have experienced this change from that day to this? Did not Christ declare himself to be the vine, his true followers the branches; and as the branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye except ye abide in me? Is not therefore an abiding in Christ sufficient for renovation, regeneration and the new birth? The Apostle says it is: "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." Not if any man is begotten by Christ the father, in Ann Lee the mother, he is a new creature. This is your doctrine: The above is Christ's and his apostles. You say that Ann Lee is the mother of all living in the new creation: see page 439.

And again: "Then the man who was called *Jesus*, and the woman who was called *Ann*, are verily the two first foundation pillars of the Church of Christ—the two anointed ones—the two first heirs of promise, between whom the covenant of eternal life is established—the first Father and Mother of all the children of regeneration." See page 440.

Now you see your want of faith, honesty and consistency. In pages 104 and 5, your description of the church was very like the true. There you say, "the *primitive Church* was not built upon any human system whatever, artfully formed by man's device; but upon the inspiration of the living God." What hath bewitched you in writing 300 and odd pages, that ye have not obeyed the truth, but that you

have been artfully forming a human system, to present to the world that Ann Lee and her offspring constitute in the latter day of christendom the true church? Nay, I need not confine it to that number of pages, for that seems to be the object of the whole book, containing 622 pages.

Therefore, ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye are out of the spirit and doctrine which Christ and his apostles were in; but in that fleshly state which would lay another foundation than that he has already laid, to get to yourselves a name. Thus you prove yourselves, notwithstanding your fair show in the flesh, pretending to be more faithful in bearing a testimony against the flesh, to be out of Christ's spirit, in the very spirit which is Anti-Christ and a deceiver, because you do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, that is in your fleshly spirits, there to rule and to reign whose right it is, God over all blessed forever, and so through this medium become his church and people; but you must acknowledge *Ann Lee to be the only mother* of all the regenerated offspring of Christ, and your church, which rests upon her, the only true church, and that out of it there is no salvation!!!

This is the tone of your writing, and spirit of your doctrine. What works can be more in the flesh, than to state the expressions of Christ and his followers to play upon the weakness and credulity of the inexperienced, to gather them together under the sacred name of religion, to constitute a church not according to the revelation of the will of God, but according to the will of designing men, who doubtless have their carnal views and selfish ends to answer by it?

Is not this prostitution of soul much more abhorrent in the divine sight, than that among whoremongers and harlots? And do not the latter stand a better chance to enter the kingdom of heaven than the former? Answer to this, ye that are guilty, and come out from your abominations ye fleshly minded systematizers, and no longer pervert the way of the Lord by teaching the people "statutes that are not good, and judgment whereby they cannot live." The world needs none of your systems, creeds and inventions, because cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and that maketh flesh his arm; but blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. The Lord is equal to his own work, and he will carry it on in the earth to the gathering of the people unto himself, to the praise of his own blessed name; not confined to sects, denominations, modes nor forms; but to those in every nation, kindred, tongue and people, that fear him and work righteousness, are accepted of him.

If thy brother trespass against thee, tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he hear thee, then thou hast gained thy brother. Your publication is, in my opinion, no small trespass upon the christian cause, derogatory both to the goodness and wisdom of God, inasmuch as it teacheth a way for salvation that Christ and his disciples never knew nor taught. Therefore, please to hear and forbear; if not, if I have life and ability, I have it in my heart to tell it to the

church. That is, make it so public as that those of the truly begotten of God in Christ Jesus, wherever they may be scattered, by whatever name they may be called, may hear the complaint and labour for your restoration, whom if you will not hear, you must then be unto them as heathenish men. I mean the leaders of your society or church as you call it. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken to the voice of the Lord is better than the fat of rams.

It is not out of ill will, hatred or malice to you, have I written; but out of regard to the precious cause of truth and good will to you; that you may abandon the works of the flesh* in systematizing, as well as in every thing else, for this act is the height of abomination, because it teaches the way of the Lord (or pretends to teach it) in the very spirit of Anti-Christ—is nothing less than the spirit of Satan transformed into an angel of light. Herein lies your deception, and if possible this satanical spirit, in the delightful seraphic appearance of an angel from Heaven, would deceive the very elect; those I mean who have not chosen Ann Lee, nor lying vanities, but the Lord for their spiritual portion, and the God of Jacob for their inheritance. Therefore, bear with me and permit me to turn your attention not to societies, men, nor books, but simply to *that* which is accessible to all even the meanest capacity among you—I mean to the light of Christ in the conscience; the grace of God, which the Apostle saith, hath appeared to all men. This, like the philosopher's stone, will turn all into gold. Like the power of Christ outwardly, which healed all manner of diseases, so inwardly it will as there is faith in it, heal all the maladies of the soul. This is all that is wanted by devotion to produce a change of soul, that it may have immortality and eternal life conferred; and what can produce this but the light which I have mentioned, which the Apostle says is the life of men? That is to say, confers immortality and eternal life to the soul as it is obedient to it.

Now, brethren, in the freedom of the gospel affection I salute you and bid you farewell; hoping the freedom which I have taken will not lessen your esteem for the cause of truth, nor bar me from your bosom nor your doors; for it was out of good will to the cause that I came to see you, and I trust if health permits the same good will will prompt me to see you again. And I have a particular desire that when any of your society passes through where I live, you would if convenient call and see me; for I have (as the ancients say) both straw and provender and places to lie down in, and you shall be as you always have been heartily welcome. If you think I have any selfish ends to answer, by my severity and freedom towards you, you are mistaken; for both have been extended out of good will, and for the building up in the precious cause. Therefore, to that precious light in the conscience, the grace and gift of God in the soul, for justification, sanctification and redemption, I commend you with my own soul.

* But let the spirit of Christ have the rule over your spirits. then whatever you do, as to religion or the world will be to the glory of God.